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Canada Post delivers innovation

DIGITAL SURVIVOR

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Many Canadians may have been shocked to see a recent Bain & Co. ranking Canada's 25 hottest dot-coms, published in The Globe and Mail, that put Canada Post's Epost Canada service at No. 9.

Canada Post on a list of the hottest dot-coms? The organization that many suspect actually works hard to lose and misdirect mail?

It's said that the Internet changes everything, and it's undoubtedly changing the business of the post office. Canada Post has moved aggressively to get involved with electronic business.

What it's done should provide valuable insight to other Canadian businesses eager to make their mark on-line.

Canada Post has come up with a number of innovative Internet services. Visit its Web site (**www.canadapost.ca**) and take a look at eParcel, a system that on-line stores can use to automatically deal with shipping costs. It's also at the forefront in working with e-billing, which is expected to be one of the fastest growing on-line applications this year.

Canada Post clearly is not afraid to try new things. It's willing to experiment, make mistakes and learn from the experience.

It also moves quickly. Consider what Canada Post has done in establishing new services since the Internet has appeared. For example, you can get an accurate quote on the cost of shipping a parcel within the country through an on-line rate calculator, (**www.canadapost.ca/CPC2/common/rates/rates.shtml**).

It's got an on-line store that rivals, at least in terms of technology, any other e-business initiative out there — you can find it through the Web site.

Canada Post also realizes that to succeed with some of its projects, it has to forge partnerships. It understands it doesn't have the expertise to do it all. That's why the Epost service, for example, was undertaken as a joint venture with Cebra, the e-commerce subsidiary of the Bank of Montreal, and features the involvement of high-tech companies such as EDS.

Another key element: Canada Post has reinjected passion into the attitudes of some of its staff. The folks who are working on e-business initiatives are excited about what can be done.

Perhaps most important, Canada Post has woken up to the impact of the Internet, and realizes it must change its way of doing business. With competitive models arising from organizations such as WebVan, Kozmo.com and other companies getting into home delivery, Canada Post knows it could quickly become irrelevant.

Which means that it needs to change, and fast — which makes it a top dot-com.

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